United Nations A/C.3/70/SR.14

General Assembly
Seventieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
5 January 2016

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Hilale ..... (Morocco)
Later: Ms. Kupradze (Vice-Chair) ..... (Georgia)

Contents

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

15-17918 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/69/41, A/70/162, A/70/222, A/70/267, A/70/289, A/70/315, A/HRC/28/56 and A/HRC/28/56/Add.1)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/70/265)

1. **Mr. Mezmur** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of the Child), reporting orally on the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, said that, with Somalia's recent accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all Member States but the United States of America had ratified it. However, universal ratification of the three Optional Protocols remained a distant prospect, given the pace of activity since his predecessor's report to the Third Committee. Thanks to General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, which authorized his Committee to meet in dual chambers, it had been able to review and adopt concluding observations on 44 State party reports, reducing its backlog to 51 reports. At its sixty-ninth session, it had appointed a rapporteur on reprisals.

2. Obviously, no one questioned the underlying values of the Convention. Yet almost half of the extremely poor were aged 18 or younger. Almost 10 per cent of the world's primary school-age children were not in school. Children suffered violence of every kind, including sexual exploitation, and girls and other vulnerable children experienced de jure and de facto discrimination. The Committee also saw many instances of inadequately funded institutions; institutions that were unable or unwilling to collect and analyse disaggregated data; large-scale, unnecessary institutionalization; low levels of birth registration and, increasingly, children harmed by online pornography or bullying, austerity measures or the effects of climate change. It was past time to move from universal ratification to universal implementation.

3. In the context of the ongoing migration crisis, States had an obligation to ensure that their migration laws considered the best interests of the child and to protect children's right to freedom from all forms of violence. With respect to children in conflict with the law, the Committee was concerned to note trends towards reducing the minimum age of criminal responsibility, imposing harsh penalties on children and depriving them of adequate substantive or procedural protection. The Committee therefore particularly welcomed the General Assembly's request in its most recent resolution on the rights of the child (A/RES/69/157) that the Secretary-General should commission an in-depth global study on children deprived of their liberty. It also welcomed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including, in particular, target 16.2 on ending all forms of violence against children.

4. **Mr. Kunert** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union welcomed Somalia's ratification of the Convention and wished to highlight Myanmar's signature of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. It remained gravely concerned about child poverty and the obstacles to children's protection, participation and education. Noting that half of out-of-school children lived in countries affected by conflict, he asked what could be done to safeguard their right to education.

5. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that his Government had been pleased to note the adoption of a joint general comment by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18). In its opinion, collaboration not only improved the treatment of multifaceted problems but also strengthened the collaborating treaty bodies. He would be interested in the Chair's views on the subject.

6. *Ms. Kupradze (Georgia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

7. **Mr. de la Mora Salcedo** (Mexico) said that in response to the Committee's concluding observations on its third periodic report (CRC/C/MEX/CO/3), in December 2014, Mexico had enacted the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents to provide a basic legal framework for the protection of the children's rights at the federal level. It had also recently established an interinstitutional working group with a view to implementing the Committee's recommendations on its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CRC/C/MEX/CO/4-5). The working group would be meeting with a Committee expert to report on its progress and allow him to expound on the recommendations and how they might be implemented.

8. **Mr. Thórsson** (Iceland) commended the Committee for its efficiency and asked the Chair to assess the experience of considering reports in dual chambers.

9. **Ms. O'Connell** (Ireland) said that Ireland shared the Chair's view that the realization of children's rights hinged on a wide range of factors. Given the need for a multisectoral approach, she would like to know what types of new partnerships he envisioned. She would also appreciate his comments on the role that civil society could play in monitoring the enforcement of laws and policies on the rights of the child, including the right to education.

10. **Mr. Mezmur** (Chair, Committee on the Rights of the Child), responding to the representative of Ireland, said that the primary partnerships should be between government departments and with national human rights organizations and universities. The State should also partner with stakeholders that had an impact in children's lives, including in particular religious and traditional leaders, as well as with the private sector. With respect to the role of civil society, the Committee depended on a range of stakeholders for follow-up and monitoring, including civil society organizations, whose alternative reports were very useful.

11. Responding to the representative of Iceland, he said that the experience with dual chambers had been largely positive, as the Committee had been able to make headway on its backlog. Although it had adopted draft recommendations in parallel chambers, it had finalized them in plenary in order to maintain quality. The secretariat's support had been invaluable. However, it could do more with additional funding from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

12. Effective implementation of the Committee's recommendations was paramount, and he was therefore very happy to observe Mexico's nuanced approach. The Committee was developing a general comment on the rights of adolescents that would address some of the issues raised during Mexico's presentation of its reports.

13. As to the question of the Japanese representative, he agreed that additional input from another treaty body produced better, more credible documents. Joint comments also reduced the burden on States parties, avoided duplication of jurisprudence and made more efficient use of resources. Their only drawback was that they took longer to draft. The Committee would continue to work with other treaty bodies on issues of mutual interest. For example, it was talking with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a view to improving and updating general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities.

14. Regarding children's right to education in general, a surprising number of countries did not have genuinely free and compulsory education. Education was particularly important in situations of humanitarian crisis or conflict, and human rights education could even prevent conflict. The Committee had repeatedly asked States parties to take steps to ensure that schools were protected from attacks. In that connection, prolonged use of schools by armed forces or armed groups seriously endangered children's right not only to education but also to survival and development.

15. **Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio** (Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography), introducing her report (A/70/222), said that the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography by the Bahamas and Kiribati brought the number of States parties to 171. Looking back over the quarter century since the establishment of her mandate, she was seriously concerned at the failure of States to follow through on their obligations. She hoped that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would result in real changes for actual and potential child victims of sexual exploitation.

16. Her first annual report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/28/56 and A/HRC/28/56/Add.1) had focused on the sale and sexual exploitation of children facilitated by information and communication technologies. In that connection, the international community would benefit from a permanent, multi-stakeholder structure to harmonize practices, help States develop effective legislation, policies and strategies and facilitate transnational cooperation on the online sexual exploitation of children.

17. With regard to country visits, in 2015 she had visited Armenia, and she would be visiting Japan shortly. She would be travelling to Georgia in 2016 and had requested to visit Mozambique.

18. Her report to the General Assembly focussed on comprehensive care, recovery and reintegration programmes for child victims of sexual exploitation. There was a lack of data on the number of child victims, whose registration was indispensable to ensure follow-up. For example, the number of child victims of online sexual exploitation was unknown. As her predecessors had also emphasized, disaggregated data was needed on every aspect of the sale, trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

19. Support for child victims should be child-sensitive and should consist of integrated services ranging from immediate medical care and psychological support to legal aid and long term-reintegration measures. Many States needed to eliminate barriers to reporting and identifying victims and institute safeguards to prevent system-induced trauma. Several failures in care and recovery programmes stemmed from the deep-rooted misconceptions that the child was responsible or that an adolescent could consent to his or her exploitation, as well as from gender prejudices, which led to the marginalisation of both boys and children who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI).

20. The recovery and reintegration of child victims of sexual exploitation was a very long process. While good first-response services abounded, medium- and long-term rehabilitation services did not. In that connection, the importance of appropriate and sustained funding and resourcing could not be overstated. Rehabilitation should be based on an individualized plan and should foster the child's sense of agency. Whenever possible, it should involve the family and the community in order to forestall discrimination. States should establish mandatory training and minimum qualifications for caregivers, provide adequate support and assistance for them and develop and monitor minimum standards for organizations that provided care.

21. **Ms. Probst-Lopez** (Switzerland) asked the Special Rapporteur for examples of effective ways to minimize the contribution of information and communications technologies to the exploitation of children. Switzerland would continue to follow the Special Rapporteur's work and her efforts to coordinate her activities with other United Nations treaty bodies. It had recently launched an awareness-raising campaign to combat child sex tourism.

22. **Mr. Garcia** (United States of America) said that his delegation agreed that child victims of sexual exploitation should receive care, recovery and reintegration services tailored to their individual needs. It also agreed that vocational training for rescued victims was often gender-biased and rarely tailored to the local labour market. It applauded the Special Rapporteur's emphasis on the vulnerability of LGBTI youth. In that connection, his delegation would appreciate examples of good practice for identifying boys and young LGBTI victims and providing them with appropriate services.

23. **Ms. McElwaine** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union's recently adopted Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy made protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation a priority. Child victims of sexual exploitation often faced barriers to education, but a lack of education made them more vulnerable to exploitation. Her delegation would appreciate policy recommendations on how to break that vicious cycle and, in general, on what could be done to improve the implementation of the Optional Protocol.

24. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that he hoped that the Special Rapporteur's upcoming visit to Japan would be fruitful. In June 2014, Japan had amended its child pornography law to outlaw child pornography, with penalties effective beginning July 2015. In paragraph 89(a) of her report, the Special Rapporteur invited the international community to facilitate cooperation to provide for the care, recovery and reintegration of child victims. He asked her to elaborate on that point and indicate any existing examples of good practice.

25. **Mr. de la Mora Salcedo** (Mexico) agreed that States bore primary responsibility for the design and implementation of programmes, policies and services to ensure the right to care, recovery and reintegration of children, including their timely identification as victims. His delegation would value her opinion on the best mechanisms for providing such services. It would also appreciate practical recommendations for the reintegration of child victims.

26. **Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio** (Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography) said that her report cited good practices that could be replicated, such as the Scandinavian child houses, which avoided system-induced trauma. Israel

had an effective outreach system, also described in her report.

27. With respect to child sexual exploitation facilitated by information and communications technology, she was pleased to have participated in the #WePROTECT Children Online Global Summit, organized by the United Kingdom in December 2014. Combating online sexual exploitation required effective cooperation among States, as well as with civil society and private industry. In terms of good practices, the first step was to make children aware of the risks involved in going on line. Another good practice was to develop online hotline apps that children could use to get immediate help.

28. While the majority of victims of sexual exploitation were girls, many were boys or LGBTI youth. Outreach was particularly important with boys because of their ingrained belief that asking for help was unmanly.

29. Young survivors of sexual exploitation faced multiple barriers to education. Many school systems would not enrol children who had attended school infrequently if at all. Many would not accept children with no legal documentation. Once enrolled, child survivors needed emotional and academic support. The dropout risk was great. Child survivors should not be systematically forced to go to school. Education should be a part of the individualized plan crafted with the child's participation and tailored to his or her needs.

30. In situations of armed conflict, the peace process should include consideration of how the international community could help the State fulfil its obligations to ensure accountability and redress for child victims of sexual exploitation. She had joined with the Special Rapporteur on the right to health and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery in offering assistance to Nigeria for addressing the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of girls who had been abducted by Boko Haram. She was looking forward to the conclusions and recommendations of the panel appointed by the Secretary-General to investigate the response of the United Nations to allegations of sexual abuse surrounding the deployment of foreign military forces in the Central African Republic.

31. Regarding pornography in Japan, she looked forward to hearing the details of Japanese legislation on the subject during her upcoming visit.

32. **Mr. Tituaña Matango** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that its member States were well known for their commitment to advancing the rights of the child. Mostly middle-income countries, they were working to address childhood vulnerabilities due to racial discrimination and gender inequality; violence, organized crime and drug trafficking and the effects of the global financial crisis and natural disasters.

33. They recognized the need for attention to vulnerable groups such as disabled and indigenous children and, in particular, for the mainstreaming of issues related to indigenous children in their national development policies. They remained committed to intensifying their efforts to prevent all forms of discrimination against indigenous children, in cooperation with indigenous peoples.

34. They called on all countries involved in the migration phenomenon to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrant children and adolescents, on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, and to safeguard the interests of minors in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. Given the complex reasons for the mass migration of accompanied and unaccompanied minors, it was important to coordinate the efforts of countries and international organizations. The commitments made during the third Meeting on Migrations of CELAC were a step in the right direction. In view of the importance of adequate nutrition for early childhood development, they were also pleased to report the adoption of the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Eradication of Hunger 2025.

35. The CELAC member States categorically condemned bullying and committed themselves to taking appropriate steps to prevent it, including by combating stereotyping and discrimination. Once again, they stressed the need for all countries to strengthen their efforts to develop early childhood programmes, with the support of international organizations.

36. The CELAC member States attached great importance to all forms of international cooperation and reiterated the need to improve the coordination of assistance to developing countries. The realization of

the rights of children hinged on successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which would require a multifaceted approach and the international community's commitment to mobilize all necessary resources.

37. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the SADC countries had a longstanding commitment to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, confirmed by their unanimous ratification of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Furthermore, they all had legal protections in place to safeguard the rights and welfare of children.

38. In the spirit of the SADC Business Plan on Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Youth 2009-2015, they recognized the need to combat malnutrition by evaluating children's nutritional needs, treating and preventing acute malnutrition and strengthening public health systems. They noted the urgent need to protect children in situations of armed conflict from abduction, trafficking, military recruitment, sexual slavery and forced marriage and to ensure their continued education. Mindful of their obligations to disabled children, they were working to include them in society on an equal basis by retrofitting regular schools, placing appropriately trained teachers in classrooms and ensuring that schools were fully accessible. They once again stressed the need for policies and action plans to support the many children living in child-headed households. In regard to HIV/AIDS, they were developing family, community and national strategies to mitigate the negative impact of AIDS-related illness and death on the health, welfare and education of children, many of whom were already poor.

39. **Mr. Kyaw Tin** (Myanmar), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN attached great importance to meeting children's basic needs for food, education and health care and to safeguarding their rights through appropriate legal frameworks, policies and programmes. It had adopted a variety of platforms and policies for that purpose, including, most recently, the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

40. In 2015, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children had drafted its terms of reference and work plan for 2012-2016. It would focus on implementing the relevant international and ASEAN instruments and developing policies, programmes and strategies. In addition, it would help member States prepare periodic reports for the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other treaty bodies.

41. ASEAN was collaborating with United Nations entities and other development partners to promote and protect the rights of children. The fruits of such collaboration included the soon-to-be-launched network of social service agencies, specifically designed to help protect women and children from violence and assist victims, and the 2014 Framework Agreement for Cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). ASEAN hoped that the Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations would strengthen the efforts of member States to meet the Sustainable Development Goals relating to women and children and thanked the United Nations for providing expertise on the elimination of violence against women and children to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

42. ASEAN had begun implementing phase two of the ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative. It would continue to mainstream the protection of women, children and other vulnerable groups in the 2015-2020 ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response Work Programme.

43. **Mr. Vrailas** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that, despite progress on promoting and protecting their rights, children continued to suffer from inexcusable violence, distressing inequalities and the horrors of war, from which they were fleeing in record numbers. The European Union was strongly committed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols and called on States Parties to withdraw any reservations to them. Stressing the importance of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure, he said that seven European Union States had already ratified it.

44. With its partners in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, the European Union would be introducing a draft resolution on the rights of the child with a focus on the right to education. Together with Uruguay and UNICEF, it was also sponsoring an interactive panel discussion on the right to education in emergencies.

45. The European Union was committed to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both internally and through its external policies, including by supporting implementation. With respect to target 16.2, on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children, strengthening child protection systems was a key priority of its Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019). Moreover, since 2012, the importance of integrated child protection systems had been a recurring topic of discussion at the annual meetings of European Forum on the Rights of the Child, which had proposed 10 principles for such systems.

46. The European Union was deeply concerned about the ongoing refugee crisis and considered the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to be critical to addressing its root causes. In the near term, protecting the rights of migrant and refugee children should be a primary consideration. Assisting child victims of trafficking and enhancing cooperation in that area were also European Union priorities and part of its Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016.

47. As part of its Education and Training 2020 strategy, member States would share best practices for guaranteeing access to quality education for all at all levels. Furthermore, the European Union would continue to increase its support for education in emergencies. With respect to humanitarian assistance, its Children of Peace Initiative was supplemented by a dedicated budget line for humanitarian projects.

48. It welcomed the engagement of the United Nations on behalf of children in armed conflict and supported its efforts to fight impunity and address persistent perpetrators. It especially welcomed the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and actively supported the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign.

49. The European Union also welcomed the efforts of the Special Representative on Violence against Children. It remained committed to ending all violence against children, including the death penalty for offences committed by minors. It had recently launched a global outreach campaign focusing on ending child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and it set aside funds for projects to prevent female genital mutilation.

50. The European Union had been a staunch supporter of Sustainable Development Goal 5, on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Its new framework for gender equality and women's empowerment aimed to help partner countries establish a more enabling environment for women and girls. Together with UNICEF, it had developed a comprehensive child rights toolkit for integrating children's rights in development cooperation.

51. Following the adoption of the Directive 2011/92/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, member States were strengthening their legislation and structures to better protect child victims, prosecute abusers and prevent abuse. The Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online, a joint initiative launched by the European Union and the United States of America in 2012, united 54 countries and should result in more rescued victims, more effective prosecution and fewer online images of child sexual abuse.

52. The European Union fully supported target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, regarding the elimination of the child labour, and would strengthen its action in that sphere. It would continue to promote and protect the rights of the child through political dialogue and through cooperation with the United Nations system, Member States, regional organizations and civil society.

53. **Mr. Radomski** (Poland) said that Poland was proud to have initiated the negotiations on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and welcomed the unprecedented number of ratifications. However, the Convention was worthless if not implemented. States parties had a duty to enact the implementing law, of which Bangladesh's Children Act of 2013 was a good recent example. They also had a duty to allocate sufficient human, technical and financial resources for the dissemination of child-related laws. Poland itself had recently amended its Labour Code to double the amount of leave that parents could take following the birth of a child. It had also passed the Act on Care for

Children under the Age of 3, which improved access to public child care.

54. Poland was one of the core sponsors of Human Rights Council resolution 29/8 on strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage. Deeply concerned about increasing violence against educational facilities, it had affirmed its commitment to implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict by signing the Safe Schools Declaration.

55. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that her Government considered the traditional family the guardian and protector of children, women, the elderly and the disabled and was therefore deeply committed to its protection. Given the priority importance of children's education and health, it looked forward to engaging in the development of a framework for the foilow-up and review of child-related commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Reiterating Egypt's firm commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, she called on all Member States to refrain from introducing controversial notions regarding children's needs during the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Children should be allowed to develop their full potential and should be taught respect for their parents, respect for their own cultural identity, values and language and the values of their country, as well as respect for other civilizations.

56. Egyptian laws prohibited all forms of violence against children. Regarding violence against children in situations of armed conflict, her Government condemned the attacking and killing of Palestinian children in the occupied territories and stressed the need to end impunity for the perpetrators.

57. Her Government commended the work in Egypt of the United Nations Population Fund-United Nations Children's Fund Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and planned to mobilize more resources to support similar programmes in Africa. Thanks to the strong partnership between it and UNICEF, implementation of the Egypt country programme for 2013-2107 was proceeding apace, and it counted on continued cooperation with UNICEF to promote and protect the rights of Egyptian children.

58. **Ms. Cantada** (Philippines) said that the Philippine Council for the Welfare of Children had been formulating and implementing policies, programmes and projects for children and youth since 1975. The largest chunk of the national budget was earmarked for education. To encourage universal enrolment, poor families were given a cash transfer on condition that their children aged 3 to 18 attended school and received basic preventive health care.

59. The Philippines remained steadfastly committed to protecting children in situations of armed conflict. In 2014, after 40 years of war and 16 years of a difficult peace process, her Government had signed a comprehensive agreement on the Bangasamoro with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). With the first phase of decommissioning the MILF combatants completed in May 2015 and a draft law containing the legal framework and governing law of the new Bangasamoro entity before Congress, a lasting peace for the children of the Philippines was finally within reach.

60. In 2014, MILF had renewed its commitment to the action plan to eliminate the recruitment and use of children, and UNICEF had conducted orientation sessions on the plan across MILF camps and communities. For its part, the Armed Forces of the Philippines had submitted a strategic plan and a draft circular on child protection in situations of armed conflict. It had also issued guidelines on the conduct of military activities on the premises of schools or hospitals, and school staff were required to report any grave violation of child rights to the Council for the Welfare of Children within 24 hours. In addition, a multi-agency monitoring, reporting and response system had been established to address grave violations of child rights in situations of armed conflict.

61. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that Morocco had begun the process of ratifying the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishing a communications procedure. In 2014, it had presented its combined third and fourth periodic reports (CRC/C/MAR/3-4) to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which had welcomed its progress in terms of legislation, ratifications and national plans and programmes, as well as its withdrawal of its reservation to article 14, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

62. Morocco had undertaken a series of reforms to promote and protect the rights of children in the context of its National Action Plan for Children

2006-2015. Following up on a mid-term review of the plan, it had initiated development of an integrated public policy on the protection of children in 2013.

63. Long the foundation of Morocco's national education strategy, the right to accessible and quality education for all was enshrined in its Constitution of 2011. Since 1998, school enrolment had doubled to 94 per cent, and a pilot stipend programme was under way to implement mandatory enrolment for children aged 6 to 15. Under a national policy on migration and asylum adopted in 2013, Morocco had taken steps to facilitate the enrolment of migrant children in public and private schools. It was also making plans to establish a national recourse mechanism for child victims of human rights violations.

64. **Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia) said that despite some progress in the protection of children's rights, children in many parts of the world were fleeing protracted crises. It was extremely important to be aware of the vulnerabilities of refugee children, including their vulnerability to abduction and human trafficking. Protecting the rights of the child required the coordinated action of United Nations agencies and entities, the special procedures, international and regional organizations, Member States and civil society.

65. The well-being of children was high on the Slovenian agenda. Slovenia had proposed the establishment of the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and would mark the first European Day with a conference in the National Assembly. It paid particular attention to the training of professionals in different fields, such as the prevention of domestic violence and online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. In 2014, it had launched the first nationwide campaign to combat violence against women and teenage girls, and it had plans to amend laws and issue guidelines to address violence against children in school. Slovenia also paid particular attention to the promotion of the rights of children in its cooperation and humanitarian assistance efforts, including by financially supporting the projects of Slovenian non-governmental organizations. Launched in 2005, its "Our Rights" programme to educate children on their rights had reached more than 175,000 children in over 20 countries.

66. **Ms. Pérez Cisneros** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate and recalling General Assembly resolution 69/158 on protecting children from bullying, said that Mexico had decided to make bullying a priority issue and had initiated several programmes to address it. It had also recently passed the General Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents. At the regional level, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had adopted the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, which set targets for protecting and promoting the rights of children, adolescents and young people, as well as an operational guide for its implementation and follow-up.

67. Government action was required to protect the best interests of vulnerable children and to empower children and adolescents to report abuses and achieve respect for their rights. Mexico would like to see the General Assembly address the rights of children from a comprehensive perspective that linked human rights and development. It would be participating actively in the creation of the new global partnership to end violence against children.

68. **Ms. Razzouk** (United States of America) said that well-founded hopes for the advancement of children's rights were clouded by the impact of humanitarian crises of unprecedented scale. Never in recent memory had so many children been subjected to such unspeakable brutality. The United States was appalled by the Syrian regime's almost daily bombardment of civilians, including children. To help children affected by crises, the United States had doubled its contributions to UNICEF in 2014 and had recently announced an additional contribution to assist the Syrian humanitarian effort. Through its "No Lost Generation" initiative, it would continue to support efforts on behalf of children in Syria and elsewhere.

69. The United States would continue to work with other Governments to eliminate gender disparities in education and had launched an initiative to address the challenges preventing adolescent girls from completing school. Domestically, it was investing heavily in early childhood education.

70. **Ms. Gatto** (Italy) said that her delegation attached great importance to advancing the rights of children around the globe. It had spearheaded efforts to protect children in situations of armed conflict and had actively contributed to the adoption of Human Rights Council resolution 24/23 on strengthening efforts to

prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, as well as General Assembly resolution 69/156 on child, early and forced marriage.

71. Italy was committed to ending female genital mutilation, which was prohibited by the Italian code of medical ethics. Negotiating on behalf of the European Union, it had enlisted a record number of sponsors for General Assembly resolution 69/150 on intensifying global efforts for its elimination.

72. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that Israel's concern for the well-being of children knew no colour, ethnicity, faith nor border. School in Israel was free for children aged 3 to 17. Almost all students completed secondary school, and increasing numbers graduated university. Special-needs children received education tailored to their abilities and needs in specialized institutes and were integrated into the regular classroom when possible. Israel fostered a culture of learning by providing a holistic learning environment. A diverse and multicultural society, it strove not only to provide all groups with access to education but also to teach tolerance and coexistence.

73. Israel endeavoured to make health care available to all children by offering assistance for pregnant women, children, families and the disabled. Dental care for Israeli children was covered by government-financed health insurance programmes, and dental checks were conducted in schools once a year for Israeli pupils.

74. Israel had been present in every major humanitarian crisis, offering cutting-edge medical care and supplies, and it was proud that children in every corner of the world had been saved by breakthrough treatments invented in Israel. Its Agency for International Development Cooperation, MASHAV, was developing an action plan for international child development assistance and had hosted numerous international workshops on child-related topics in 2014.

75. **Mr. Babjee** (Singapore) said that children should be free to pursue their dreams, without fear of hunger, illness, prejudice or violence. To protect children from hunger, low-income pupils in Singapore received breakfast coupons for the school canteen. To keep children mentally and physically healthy, all children in Singapore were immunized, underwent regular health and dental screenings at school and could talk with a school counsellor about their problems. To discourage discrimination of any kind, they learned about the different races and cultures of their classmates. And, as residents of the safest country in the world, they enjoyed safe and child-friendly public spaces.

76. Under its Compulsory Education Act, Singapore was taking steps to improve the accessibility, affordability and quality of early childhood services and early intervention programmes for children with special needs. Furthermore, it was improving its education system to teach children holistically, in order to help them seize opportunities and rise to challenges.

77. **Mr. Hasegawa** (Peru) said that his Government had taken significant steps to promote and protect the rights of children. Peru's National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents 2012-2021 focused on providing access to quality early, primary and secondary education; reducing infant malnutrition and combating violence against children and adolescents, while its Multisectoral Commission ensured the intersectoral and governmental coordination required to implement the plan effectively. A national programme had been established to assist street children, and another provided healthy food for children attending public preschools and primary schools. In short, Peru was committed to strengthening the implementation, monitoring and review of child-related national policies and to mainstreaming the advancement of children. The size and complexity of the challenge was a reason for action, not despair. Peru called on the international community to join forces to tackle the problems facing children from a broader perspective, in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

78. **Ms. Andujar** (Dominican Republic) said that her Government's National Development Strategy 2030 set specific targets for reducing inequalities, ending violence against children and combating child poverty. Many initiatives, such as the conditional cash-transfer programme, the comprehensive care centres for the disabled, the national literacy programme and extended school days, directly benefited young children and were designed to establish a comprehensive system of support for children, adolescents, their families and their communities. The foster family programme provided temporary homes for endangered children, and local boards had been established to protect and restore the rights of minors. In April, the Dominican Republic had launched its first road map to end

violence against children, which was the result of a broad participatory process led by the National Council for Children and Adolescents with the support of UNICEF. Despite various, mostly financial, challenges, her Government would continue to invest in the rights of children.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.